

1 MS. SYRACOPOLOUS: I'm even shorter
2 than normal height.

3 The statistics on media ownership and
4 representation is mind boggling if you think
5 about them in human terms because what they mean
6 for women is that along with gender, racial
7 discrimination, and pay in hiring, we're faced
8 with near obliteration of gender and racial
9 information news and perspective.

10 As more of our communication and
11 information sources are owned by large
12 corporations rather than local entities, we
13 become less likely to know about the people,
14 events, ideas, perspectives, and actual fact that
15 have not been predecided as mainstream.

16 Because the purveyors of this
17 information are distant corporations and their
18 advertisers are national chains, we here and
19 everywhere have no mechanism by which to pressure
20 the media to provide us with real relevant, truly
21 informative news.

22 Here are some examples of how white

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1 male dominated corporate decisions impact our
2 community of women. A recent call-in topic on
3 104.9 FM locally was, "Tell us what women do to
4 turn you on." Women were referred to as "bitches"
5 and "sluts." Two callers emphasized that what
6 turned them on were women who looked really young
7 and little.

8 Fox News illustrated a broadcast about
9 a serial murderer that had already killed three
10 women in Florida using visuals of bikini-clad
11 women dancing and drinking.

12 Among the candidates presently running
13 for U.S. President there is one woman. The
14 corporate media inundated us for days about what
15 they considered important women's issue that her
16 candidacy raised, the existance of her cleavage.

17 Day after day in our local newspapers
18 and TV news we are confronted with the rape
19 and/or murder of a woman. Each incident strikes
20 fear in all our hearts, but for all the media
21 time spent denigrating women, it is almost never
22 the time that's spent discussing how to plot the

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1 shameful, horrifying reality of our country's
2 longstanding pandemic of violence against women.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. SYROCOPOLOUS: In addition, as
5 long as the media TV chains continue to consider
6 news segments as revenue sources rather than
7 public services our society will continue to be
8 less fully informed and more vulnerable to
9 manipulation.

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MODERATOR SIGALOS: It is now time for
13 the first public comment portion of our program.
14 Before I review the ground rules, would the
15 following people make your way to either one of
16 the two aisle microphones: Lynn Ziegler, Breona
17 Gutschmidt, Ian Page-Echols, Chris Muellenbach,
18 Alan Bushong, Deborah Vinsel, Christopher Miller,
19 Sue Disciple, Jeff Pearson, Roberto Maestas.

20 Okay. Once again, two minutes is the
21 time limit for each public commenter. I
22 encourage people to gather their thoughts so they

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1 can say what they need to say within that time
2 period. As you see, we have two aisle
3 microphones. They're adjustable mics so feel
4 free to adjust them yourself to the height that
5 you feel most comfortable with, but be sure to
6 speak into the microphone so we can hear your
7 comments.

8 People will be called in the order
9 that they registered, and from time to time I'll
10 call out the number so that people get a sense of
11 where we are.

12 Having said that, Lynn Ziegler.

13 MS. ZIEGLER: Thank you.

14 Good evening. I'm the first of the
15 voices you will hear tonight, and I'd like you to
16 look around the room. You will see every
17 imaginable type of face, age of face, all
18 different colors. You are, you are in one of the
19 most diverse cities and arguably the best one on
20 media issues. Welcome.

21 My name is Lynn Ziegler. I'm a
22 writer. I inaugurated the first family TV column

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1 in Seattle's Child, and I'm the author of Sponge
2 Heads, You and Media, a handbook for parents for
3 twentieth century media. It is not a TV bashing
4 book. It is very positive. And all the
5 Commissioners are -- I have one for each of you.

6 We're at a pivotal point in media.
7 I'm here on behalf of young families with
8 children. Some of you may remember a film called
9 Jumanji that featured Robin Williams and Bonnie
10 Hunt. Jumanji was a game that kind of took on a
11 life of its own, and once the dye was cast,
12 improbable and frequently unhappy things
13 happened, like a stampede of elephants, and we do
14 mean elephants.

15 I see media consolidation as a similar
16 game, and you, Mr. Chairman, are playing with the
17 dice. And you hold them in your hand, and if you
18 toss them one way, a stampede of corporate types
19 -- yes, many elephants -- can erupt into a
20 problematic scenario with much disaster.

21 My passion in media is diversity.
22 With local consolidation, there are simply fewer

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1 original voices, fewer innovative voices heard.
2 And this is already happening.

3 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you very
4 much.

5 MS. ZIEGLER: Thank you.

6 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Breona Gutschmidt.

7 MS. GUTSCHMIDT: Hello. My name is
8 Breona Gutschmidt, and I'm an editor and writer
9 for a small local parenting publication called
10 ParentMap News Magazine.

11 I came to the FCC hearing held in
12 Seattle in 2003, and I'm here again today because
13 I believe that the proposed media ownership rule
14 changes will have negative impacts on families,
15 communities, women, minorities and the health of
16 our vibrant democracy.

17 Today in this short time I'd like to
18 talk about localism in one very small media
19 company. ParentMap News Magazine was founded by
20 and it's owned by a Seattle mother, and it's run
21 by a staff of 25 talented local women. ParentMap
22 is supported by local advertisers, hires

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1 exclusively local freelance writers, cover local
2 events, interviews local leaders in education,
3 early learning and development, children's health
4 experts and advocates, and many others.

5 We tell parents about a wide variety
6 of children's events all over Western Washington
7 to get families out and doing fun and educational
8 things with their kids and connect families with
9 the information and resources they need.

10 We serve our community including
11 148,000 readers in four counties and actively
12 work to build community by sponsoring events,
13 hosting lecture series, and partnering with some
14 of the amazing research institutions in our area
15 to help disseminate the latest research to
16 parents in our region.

17 ParentMap, a small business with
18 strong values, is also a great place to work, a
19 place where the line between advertising and edit
20 is clear, and the writers and editors can do work
21 they are proud of.

22 The rule change you have proposed

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1 making puts Paramount and other small family
2 owned media outlets in peril, forcing them to
3 compete with ever growing national and
4 international media conglomerates that do not
5 have the local focus, the community investment
6 and involvement, or the careful decisions -- the
7 careful consideration of children, families, and
8 women that companies like ParentMap have.

9 Making this change is a vote against
10 companies who truly have the help of families as
11 their motivations, not their bottom line, a vote
12 against the kind of community building that can
13 be achieved with local media that simply cannot
14 be achieved by media outlets producing their news
15 thousands of miles away no matter how those
16 companies try to slant it. I urge you to vote no
17 on loosening media ownership rules and yes to
18 truly local media.

19 (Applause.)

20 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Ian Page-Echols.

21 Ian Page-Echols.

22 MR. PAGE-ECHOLS: I'm a documentary

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1 film maker and artist. Although, it may not seem
2 the internet is affected by loosening media
3 cross-ownership rules that are primarily targeted
4 at newspapers, radio, and television, the
5 internet and local community access to it is
6 threatened by this change.

7 We've enjoyed a free and open flow of
8 information for the last few years, but it's the
9 same big media companies who control print, TV,
10 and radio who are the gatekeepers of the
11 internet. Those in favor of media consolidation
12 hold up the internet as the panacea for diversity
13 and free speech. Meanwhile, these same companies
14 are restricting internet access and dominating
15 and buying up the most visited websites.

16 Internet providers, such as Comcast,
17 have the ability to censor data and recently have
18 proven that they will do it. Beyond the actual
19 pipeline only a few dominant companies, internet
20 portals, such as Google and MSN, limit the access
21 to information on the internet through methods
22 like Google's page rank.

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1 Articles or websites that cite well-
2 known sources receive a higher ranking and more
3 visibility. And big companies are more likely to
4 reference big companies as a trustworthy source.
5 It becomes self-referencing and only lends
6 visibility to the larger sites.

7 Truly independent blogs and online
8 magazines that are more than a reiteration of big
9 media news bites can be nearly invisible to the
10 average user. When they are visible they are
11 often bought as an addition to a media empire.
12 Instead of people we become a market.

13 Our founding fathers made a postal
14 service to aid in free speech, to lower the
15 barriers to bring the ideas of individuals and
16 smaller organizations and found free speech to be
17 more important than democracy itself.

18 Today the postal service is mired in
19 bureaucracy, making it difficult for small
20 organizations to use these -- to ease the free
21 speech, while companies like Time Warner get
22 price breaks.

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1 In a similar way the internet media
2 delivery system that Jefferson and Madison could
3 never have imagined is being restricted. Rather
4 than supporting the spread of ideas, proposed
5 media ownership changes threaten to bog down the
6 free flow of information over the airwaves, in
7 print and on the internet.

8 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

9 MR. PAGE-ECHOLS: I challenge you to
10 uphold ownership rules as the exist.

11 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Chris Muellenbach.

14 MR. MUELLENBACH: Thank you for
15 holding this public hearing in Seattle.

16 My name is Chris Muellenbach, and I
17 work in marketing research at the Seattle Times
18 Company. I am a member of the Pacific Northwest
19 Newspaper Guild where I am the vice-chair for
20 advertising at the Seattle Times. I represent
21 the people who bring the money into local media,
22 so I'm going to spend my time talking about money

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1 and people.

2 Media consolidation facilitates the
3 slipping of obligation to community service and
4 promotes the free market mentality that what
5 sells is what's good. This lack of obligation
6 makes it far too easy for media conglomerates to
7 allow their goals to flow from I need to serve
8 the people to I need to give the people what they
9 want.

10 What follows is that proliferation of
11 cheaper infotainment options that are justified
12 because they're more profitable at the expense of
13 news and information because it is less cost
14 effective.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. MUELLENBACH: The increasing
17 homogenization and consolidation of media comes
18 at high expense to the public and to the people
19 who work at broadcast, cable, radio, and
20 newspaper media whose jobs are often left out of
21 these discussions.

22 Further relaxation of these cross-

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1 ownership rules will decrease the number of
2 people employed in the production of news,
3 marketing of product, and selling the ad space
4 necessary to maintain the last vestiges of the
5 American news gathering enterprise.

6 Please strengthen the cross-ownership
7 rules.

8 (Applause.)

9 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Alan Bushong.

10 MR. BUSHONG: Mr. Chair and FCC
11 Commissioners, first thank you for flying to our
12 coast, some of you again.

13 My name is Alan Bushong. I'm
14 Executive Director of Capital Community
15 Television. We're a community based, commercial-
16 free television organization in Salem, Oregon. I
17 gladly drove the 225 miles today, but with more
18 notice a lot more people would have come with me.

19 (Applause.)

20 Has any one of you ever been to my
21 community? Probably not. Check it out. Caught
22 between the Portland and Eugene television

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1 markets, the Salem area is the largest state
2 capital community, maybe along with Olympia, of
3 over 200,000 people with no traditional
4 commercial broadcast affiliate television. We
5 have three AM radio stations, one FM, a low power
6 UHF TV station that does not generate local news.
7 Talk about being left behind.

8 Yesterday in my community 11 babies
9 were born and 11 people died. Though people view
10 us as a white-bread community, our schools are
11 now 26 percent Latino. It's only barely over
12 half Anglo. People argue about immigration, but
13 in our community poverty, often intense poverty,
14 is an issue. Hunger, under and unemployment, a
15 lack of health insurance, jobs going overseas.
16 Those are the issues.

17 Our community is also filled with very
18 hard working, good people, but you'd never know
19 it by seeing the out of state or -- the out-of-
20 town and out-of-state media.

21 My organization, Capital Community
22 Television, produces a lot of media, but we need

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1 your help in making sure the job isn't even
2 bigger. Don't make our job tougher. Maintain
3 your ownership limits. Put local back in local
4 cable television franchising.

5 And, Mr. Chair, you said you'd follow
6 the law, but I believe twice your rulings that
7 you're taking local decision making out of cable
8 TV, and that directly, in my opinion, violates
9 1984, 1992 and 1996 laws. Please turn the corner
10 now. We've got plenty of tweedle-dee television
11 and media. We don't need tweedle-dum. Turn a
12 corner. Do something for my community. Do it
13 today.

14 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. BUSHONG: Do it for the
17 communities across the nation.

18 (Applause.)

19 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Deborah, Deborah
20 Vinsel.

21 MS. VINSEL: Alan is always a hard a
22 act to follow.

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1 Thank you Commissioners for holding
2 this hearing. And to Commissioners Copps and
3 Adelstein, welcome back to Seattle.
4 Commissioners Martin and McDowell, it's good to
5 see you here.

6 I'm Deborah Vinsel, a board member of
7 the Allcance for Community Media Northwest Board
8 of Directors representing community media
9 organizations in Alaska, Oregon, Washington,
10 Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.

11 I'm also the executive director at
12 Thurston Community Television, a PEG access
13 organization serving greater Thurston County,
14 including the capital city of Olympia.

15 Many of my concerns have already been
16 clearly and eloquently articulated, but I'd like
17 to share with you a couple of examples of why I
18 oppose media consolidation. One, there are no
19 broadcast television stations of any kind in the
20 capital city of Olympia, Washington. We fall in
21 the Seattle market area of dominant influence.
22 The Seattle affiliates located 60 miles away are

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1 considered our local TV for our community.

2 And on this past Tuesday night out of
3 the 19 contested local races and four local tax
4 initiatives on our ballot, three were mentioned
5 by any of the Seattle affiliates. Fortunately,
6 Thurston Community Television was able to fill
7 the gap on election night with local returns.
8 Thank heavens we have a strong locally negotiated
9 cable franchise to provide our community with
10 this resource, at least for the time being, but
11 that's a different issue.

12 In Thurston County we have a local
13 radio treasure, KGY-AM and FM. They have been
14 locally operated for -- owned and operated for 85
15 years. And they are passionately committed to our
16 community, unlike so many of the other radio
17 stations that are heard in our community, but are
18 not located or connected to our community in any
19 way. The airways and rights of way are owned by
20 we the people.

21 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

22 MS. VINSEL: And the public interest

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1 should have a higher priority than commercial --

2 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

3 MS. VINSEL: Do your job.

4 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

5 MS. VINSEL: Thank you for your time.

6 (Applause.)

7 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Christopher
8 Miller.

9 MR. MILLER: Thank you for coming
10 tonight. It's good to see all of you here, and I
11 hope you'll listen to us.

12 My name is Chris Miller. I grew up
13 outside of Brookings in eastern South Dakota, and
14 in 1996 a Nebraska based company bought two of
15 the five commercial radio stations in town. And
16 I was 17 at the time. I had no idea what the FCC
17 was. But I knew that something was wrong when I
18 called the station to request a song from what I
19 thought was the new DJ and no one answered the
20 request line.

21 It went downhill from there. And
22 today more than half the stations you can hear in

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1 Brookings are owned or operated by that one
2 company, and in fact, only one station in a 40-
3 mile radius isn't. Many resources are shared
4 between these stations of course, most notably
5 the news gathering. And as a result, there's a far
6 less choice, a narrowed range of stories, and
7 more prepackaged national news, or what passes
8 for news. (Applause.)

9 In a rural area, such as Brookings,
10 the lone newspaper and handful of radio stations
11 are vitally important for getting news and
12 information to the people, as TV stations are far
13 away and they focus on Sioux Falls and newer
14 forms of media are not easily accessible to many
15 residents. I've seen firsthand that the
16 consolidation does not benefit the public.

17 You as the directors of the FCC are
18 charged with protecting these means of
19 communication for the public good. That's your
20 job. It is your duty to not relax these
21 ownership rules. In fact, to really serve the
22 public, you must strengthen them.

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1 And since I have 20 seconds left, I'm
2 going to mention that these markets that
3 everybody is talking about, they are towns,
4 cities, communities full of people.

5 Thanks.

6 (Applause.)

7 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Thank you.

8 Sue Disciple.

9 MS. DISCIPLE: Hello, Commissioners.

10 AUDIENCE: Louder.

11 MS. DISCIPLE: Can you hear me now?

12 AUDIENCE: Yes.

13 MS. DISCIPLE: Okay. I'm an appointed
14 Commissioner to the Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory
15 Commission. I represent the city of Portland,
16 but I'm here to speak on behalf of the six rural,
17 suburban, and urban communities that comprise the
18 Commission.

19 Like the rest of Americans, our
20 citizens get the vast majority of their news and
21 information from newspaper, TV, and radio. Our
22 city was gratified and all our communities were

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1 gratified in 2004 when 3 million comments halted
2 FCC rule making procedures on media ownership
3 consolidation, because in our communities we
4 believe freedom, democracy and civic engagement
5 needs diverse and informed local voices.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. DISCIPLE: FCC and Consumer
8 Federation of America studies have illustrated in
9 our state that the diversity in our media markets
10 is already tenuous for both rural and urban
11 communities and will be significantly harmed by
12 the FCC's current proposal.

13 I'd like to give you a recent example
14 of how these vertically integrated conglomerates
15 reduce diversity even now. In the last two weeks
16 our local cable provider has bumped and moved
17 several services that the company doesn't own.
18 One of these was MSNBC, which is widely followed
19 in our community, and has been consigned to the
20 digital attic in favor of a cable company owned
21 sports network.

22 Now those subscribers have to pay more

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1 and get more equipment to obtain the service they
2 previously had. This amounts to a rate increase
3 for these subscribers that is the second in one
4 year. The impact of the proposed rules is to make
5 the big bigger, give them more market power, and
6 reduce the fragile diversity that communities
7 like Oregon have.

8 Oregon communities urge you to halt
9 this rush towards media consolidation.

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Before I announce
13 the next speaker, if the following people could
14 go to the nearest microphone. That one over
15 there is an option also. Andrea Cano, David
16 Boze, David Beshler, Sarah VanGelder, Franz
17 Korten, Carl Kucharski, John Klockner, Timothy
18 Karr, Fred Schaich, Amanda Anderson.

19 Would Jeff Pearson step forward.

20 AUDIENCE: What number are you?

21 MODERATOR SIGALOS: We've just begun.

22 MR. PEARSON: Yes, indeed.

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1 Hello. Thank you for being here today
2 and getting us a chance to speak. There's lot of
3 folks here. I was here -- my name is Jeff
4 Pearson. I'm a local filmmaker here in Seattle.
5 I was here in 2003 and spoke before the FCC about
6 media consolidation issues then, and in the same
7 way we're here again, unfortunately, talking
8 about exactly the same issue.

9 I guess I'd just like to say maybe in
10 the spirits of post-partisanship, though, we're
11 not here because of the cross-ownership ban, but
12 some of the bad old laws that Mr. Copps spoke of
13 as well. The Telecom Act, which I guess we have
14 to remind everyone was signed by Democrats, so in
15 that sense this argument is not really so much
16 about right versus left as it is really about big
17 versus small. And I guess in that sense too --

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. PEARSON: Thank you.

20 There's been a lot of activity in the
21 times between these two events and most of it
22 having to do with what we like to talk about as

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1 citizen media that's arisen to face down really
2 this conglomeration of media. As part of my
3 documentary "Pirate Radio USA" we managed to
4 capture the emergence of that new citizen media.

5 And so I guess in that context
6 regardless of what you ultimately decide -- and
7 certainly, I think everyone here doesn't want to
8 see all the media owned by one company in one
9 city, do we?

10 AUDIENCE: No.

11 MR. PEARSON: We sure don't.

12 But regardless, you know, for those
13 who are waiting for big media to represent our
14 best vision of what our right to free press is,
15 there are others that have decided to exercise
16 that right for themselves. And so in that sense,
17 I'm going to just say be the media and free the
18 airwaves.

19 Thank you.

20 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Roberto Maesta.
21 Roberto?

22 MR. MAESTAS: Yes. I thought you had

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1 forgotten me. Don't start it yet.

2 MODERATOR SIGALOS: Please, sir. We
3 have plenty of people. Lower the microphone
4 quickly and begin.

5 MR. MAESTAS: (Untranslated Spanish.)
6 Some things are right. And some things are
7 wrong. Some things are just, and some things are
8 unjust.

9 My name is Roberto Maestas. I'm the
10 founder Executive Director of El Centro de la
11 Raza.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MAESTAS: Center for the People of
14 all Races. Celebrated 35 years a couple weeks
15 ago.

16 I'm also until recently the chairman
17 of Radio KDNA, the voice of the farm worker of
18 hundreds of thousands in the heart of the Yakima
19 Valley, a tiny little sliver of a voice for
20 hundreds of thousands of the hardest workers that
21 make the state of Washington famous worldwide for
22 its agricultural products.

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